PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

# Albertans' Awareness of and Views on Privacy Issues

## Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Introduction*

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta is interested in assessing Albertans' awareness of and views regarding privacy issues. In order to research opinions about privacy, GPC Canada conducted a telephone survey of 604 Albertans during the month of July 2000.

For the purpose of this survey, privacy was considered as *control over the distribution and use of one's personal information.*

The two main survey purposes were:

- To assess public awareness regarding privacy issues and areas of privacy concern.
- To help in design of communication activity carried out by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The sample was designed to produce a regional breakdown of 1/3 interviews from each of Edmonton CMA (203 respondents), Calgary (200 respondents) and Balance of Province (201 respondents). This regional breakdown is close to the actual population distribution of Alberta.

For the total sample of 604 respondents, representing the Province of Alberta, the margin of error is a maximum of ±4% (0.95 level).

## *Highlights of Findings*

This section summarizes the highlights of the survey results.

**Demographics**

The sample was evenly divided between greater Edmonton, Calgary and the rest of Alberta. The gender split was equal. There was good representation across age levels (from a minimum of 18 years to a maximum of 74 years), education levels and occupations.

**Albertans' Opinions about Privacy Issues**

Albertans expressed strong agreement with the importance of protecting individual privacy in the province (78% in strong agreement).

Just over half (56%) expressed strong agreement with concern about the privacy of their own personal information. For the majority, the level of concern is increasing. Almost two-thirds (62%) agreed strongly that their concern was stronger now than it was five years ago.

However, smaller numbers agreed that privacy of personal information is at risk in Alberta (35% strongly agreed).

**Experiences of Breach of Privacy**

28% of the respondents said they had experienced a serious breach of their privacy.

These persons were asked to briefly describe the incident or incidents in question. The answers varied considerably in their depth and candour. They were categorized to the best of our ability by the sector in which the incident took place.

- The most frequent incidents were concerned with mailing lists such as those used by businesses or charities which lead to unsolicited contacts.
- The second most frequent categories concerned financial institutions and credit ratings.
- The third most frequent category concerned government services including gun registration, custody issues, foster care, subpoena issues and others.
- Other incident categories mentioned less often concerned theft of personal materials, phone solicitation, workplace matters, internet hacking, medical records, educational records, police data and insurance matters.

**Levels of Privacy Concerns, for Specific Information Items**

***About Importance of Keeping the Information Safe***

The top tier, highest ratings of importance were for financial data, personal mail and health records. Here is an abbreviated summary.

Rating "Very Important"

93% - Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores
91% - Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union
85% - Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post
83% - Your tax files
82% - Information held in credit reports
80% - Your own personal health care records

The second tier of ratings of importance were for personal conversations (including cordless phones, cell phones, email and faxed messages), workplace data, and government registry data.

Rating "Very Important"

79% - Personal conversations on a cordless phone
76% - Information about you collected by your employer
74% - Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus
74% - Personal conversation on a cell phone
73% - E-mail messages on the Internet
71% - Personal information sent over the fax

The third tier of ratings of importance were for information items which may be important to some but not to others. They concern activities which are not universal, including legal problems, Internet use (shopping and surfing), and receipt of government benefits.

Rating "Very Important"

61% - Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records
61% - Shopping information over the Internet
59% - Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments
57% - Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet

The fourth and final tier of ratings of importance were for charitable donations, utility records and traditional shopping data.

Rating "Very Important"

45% - Information about your donations to charities
39% - Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use
36% - Information about your shopping from Air Miles or club cards

### *About Concerns About Risk of Misuse of Information*

At least some strong concern about risk of misuse of information was expressed for all the information items. However, those at the top of the list included credit reports, Internet surfing, credit card numbers used when shopping, cell phone conversations, data from financial institutions, shopping information from Internet purchases and information in government registries.

Rating "Very Concerned" (percents based on those saying protection of item had high importance)

73% - Information held in credit reports
69% - Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet
67% - Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores
64% - Personal conversation on a cell phone
63% - Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union
63% - Shopping information over the Internet
60% - Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus
59% - Personal conversations on a cordless phone
58% - Your tax files
56% - Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post
53% - Your own personal health care records
53% - Personal information sent over the fax
53% - Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments
51% - E-mail messages on the Internet
51% - Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records
46% - Information about you collected by your employer
41% - Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use
40% - Information about your shopping from Air Miles or club cards
38% - Information about your donations to charities

*About Relation of Importance to Concerns About Risk of Misuse*

For many of the items, the "importance" and the "concern over risk of misuse" are in rough correspondence. In other words, items of high importance tend to show relatively high concern over risk, and items of low importance tend to show relatively low concern over risk.

Three exceptions are "Information collected about you by your employer" which has relatively high importance yet relatively low concern over risk of misuse, and two Internet items (concerning tracking surfing patterns, and shopping data) which have relatively lower importance and higher concern over risk of misuse.

*About Nature of Risk*

For each item, the concern over risk was identified as theft, or unwanted exposure (others hearing or seeing), or use in an unwanted context (such as sale to mailing lists).

The concern varies by item. For example, the main concern over credit card security is theft. The main concern over cell phone security is others hearing the conversation. The main concern over tax file security is potential misuse of the information.

**Steps to Protect Privacy**

A high percentage of Albertans (50% exactly of the survey respondents) reported having taken steps to protect their private information. The most common steps were limiting information provided over the Internet or by telephone. Others said they were just "generally cautious" about what they disclosed. More intentional steps such as shredding paper or delisting phone numbers were less frequent.

The other 50% who hadn't taken steps to protect their private information were asked if they knew whom to approach if they wanted advice. Only one-quarter of them (25% of half) could suggest sources. No one source predominated. The suggestions included: the Internet, government (generally), the Privacy Commissioner, Better Business Bureaus or similar agencies, and others.

**Awareness of and Support for Privacy Laws**

Overall, 39% said they were aware of government laws designed to protect personal information. The question did not specify jurisdictions, so the answer could have been based upon Alberta laws, federal laws, both or other.

The law with the greatest awareness was Alberta's "FOIP" law (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) (26% of total). Based only on persons who had heard of it, support for the FOIP Act was strong with 63% in strong support and very few negative towards it. Bill 40, Alberta's Health Information Act, was mentioned by only a very small proportion (8% of total). Amongst this

small number, support for Bill 40 ranged from strong to moderate. Recognition for the federal Bill C-6 and Alberta's Fair Trading Act was low (less than 5% of total for both). However, support for these two bills was strong amongst those aware of them.

Only a very small number of persons expressed concerns about privacy laws. Their comments were polarized between those who believed that "the laws were not enforced sufficiently" or that "the laws were extreme".

**Awareness of the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner**

One-third of Albertans (33% of the survey respondents) said they had heard of the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner.

**Confidence in Privacy Protection in Government Service Delivery**

Albertans expressed unease concerning three models of government service delivery which involve the use of their personal information. The question did not specify jurisdictions, so the answer could have been based upon Alberta government services, federal government services, both, or other.

Numbers of the order of 50% expressed "strong concern" over the levels of protection of information connected with Internet-based services or shared situations where multiple services are delivered by one office. Numbers of the order of 40% expressed strong concern over government services provided through private registries. The balance generally expressed "moderate concern", with only very small numbers expressing "no concern".

**Who Should Protect Privacy?**

This question was based on general sector responsibility and not specific individuals, governments or types of business.

Concerning who was most responsible for protecting privacy, Albertans were almost equally split between saying that Individuals had most responsibility (42%) and that Government had most responsibility (41%). Business was in a very distant third place (4%), and a small minority thought all three had equal responsibility (13%).

**Differences by Demographics**

Differences by location, age and occupation do exist but are generally small in relation to the magnitude of the overall patterns. For example, by occupation, Professional / senior managerial respondents were more knowledgeable about privacy issues than others, and also less concerned about risks on the Internet than were others. But the differences were only of degree and not of direction. It is safe to assume that the province-wide snapshot based on the total provincial sample provides an adequate overview of the views of the majority of adult Albertans.

## *Conclusions and Interpretation*

**Relevant to Survey Validity and Interpretation**

The results of this survey provide an excellent snapshot of the views of adult Albertans. They also provide a baseline for future use.

**Relevant to the First Survey Purpose, "To assess public awareness regarding privacy issues and areas of privacy concern".**

Privacy protection is a serious issue with Albertans. Attitudinally, most Albertans support the importance of protecting the privacy of their personal information. Behaviorally, many are already taking steps to do so themselves.

For Albertans, privacy protection is a generalized issue related to conditions of the contemporary social and business environment, and not specifically related to conditions in Alberta. Concern about personal information being at risk specifically in Alberta is not high.

Privacy concerns spread over a wide range of situations. However, some areas are more important, and concern Albertans more, than others. Predictably, the security of financial information is at the top of the list. However, the security of many other types of personal information, including technology-transmitted information, personal conversations and shopping data, is also of concern.

Albertans expressed high to moderate levels of concern about security of information in Internet-based government service delivery models, shared services models and government registries, when these models were explained to them. It is possible that concerns may increase as these service delivery models become more common.

Responsibility for protection of the privacy of personal information is clearly perceived as resting with Individuals or with Government. While this snapshot survey did not probe further into the details, these results clearly affirm an attribution of responsibility both to individuals to monitor the release of their own private information and to government to legislate as needed and to safeguard large amounts of personal data. The fact that so few Albertans attribute primary responsibility for protection of personal information to Business or to "all three" (which by implication includes Business) may indicate general low confidence in business self-regulation of privacy matters.

**Relevant to the Second Survey Purpose, "To help in design of communication activity carried out by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner".**

An opportunity has been identified for public education on steps which individuals can take to protect themselves, and on the resources and legal protections available to them.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In modern society, protecting private information is a growing concern.

The rapid development of communications technology has brought the convenience of telephone banking, on-line business, on-line shopping, and on-line education - to mention only a few. But there has been a price. These conveniences have brought with them opportunities for violation of privacy or misuse of private information by public bodies and the private sector. The trend to increased use of electronic communications has nurtured a growing public concern about individual privacy and the need for privacy protection.

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta is interested in assessing Albertans' awareness of and views regarding privacy issues. In order to research opinions about privacy, GPC Canada conducted a telephone survey of 604 Albertans during the month of July 2000.

For the purpose of this survey, privacy is considered as primarily *control over the distribution and use of one's personal information*. Personal information could be any recorded information that uniquely characterizes the individual, such as name, address, telephone number, age, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, fingerprints or blood type. Personal information could also include health care, educational, financial, criminal or other records.

The two main survey purposes were:

- To assess public awareness regarding privacy issues and areas of privacy concern, in order to provide guidelines for provincial government services to address the needs of the general public.
- To help in design of communication activity carried out by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, including providing direction on target audiences, key messages and weight.

This report provides a summary of the main survey findings.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The data were gathered by a telephone survey conducted from July 7 to 15, 2000. An 8 to 10 minute questionnaire was administered using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system. A copy of the survey, which consisted primarily of closed questions, is appended.

### 2.1 Sample

The final sample size was 604 interviews. The sample was selected randomly from current telephone listings.

The sample was designed to produce a regional breakdown of 1/3 interviews from the Edmonton CMA[1] (203 respondents), Calgary (200 respondents) and the Balance of Province[2] (201 respondents). This regional breakdown is close to the actual population distribution of Alberta.

Within each of the three geographic areas, a 50/50 gender quota was imposed. The respondents included adults between the ages of 18 and 74 inclusive.

### 2.2 Error Margins

For the total sample of 604 respondents, representing the Province of Alberta, the margin of error is a maximum of ±4% (0.95 level).

The margins of error for sub-sample breakdowns will be larger. For example, the margins for the geographic sub-samples of Edmonton, Calgary and Balance of Province is about a maximum of ±7% (0.95 level). For more specific references, please refer to the appended table of Statistical Tolerances.

[1] Edmonton CMA consists of Edmonton plus surrounding areas, including cities of St. Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc and Spruce Grove, and a few towns including Beaumont, Devon and Stony Plain.
[2] The five cities of Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Ft. McMurray comprise about ¼ of these interviews, consistent with population figures.

## 2.3 Tabulation and Report

The results for each question are reported in Chapter 3, Summary of Findings. In most cases, the complete numerical presentation has been simplified to emphasize the meaning. Percentages in most tables were adjusted for non-response. The complete tables, including all numbers, are provided in a separate Technical Appendix.

Each section of the results in Chapter 3 includes a "Highlights" section which describes the main points of the tabulations.

The Technical Appendix includes results crosstabulated by three variables, namely:

- Location (Edmonton, Calgary and Balance of Province),
- Age (18-34, 35-54, and 55-74), and
- Occupation (Professional / Senior Managerial, Other Employed, and Not Employed).

The crosstabulated data in the Technical Appendix were reviewed. Differences which were significant, both statistically and practically, are highlighted in the text of this report.

Chapter 4, Conclusions and Interpretation, presents major conclusions and interpretation, based on the results.

## 3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### 3.1 Albertans' Opinions about Privacy Issues

In order to understand Albertans' views about privacy, it is useful to start with questions regarding privacy in a general sense. How important is privacy to Albertans and is protection of privacy an issue? This section provides answers to these questions.

**Q1). I am going to read you a series of statements. I would like you to tell me how much you agree with them, by giving me a number from 1 to 7, where 1 is "Don't Agree at all" and 7 is "Agree very Much".**

For total sample (n = 604)

| Agreement | | | Statement |
|---|---|---|---|
| **High** (Answered 6-7) | **Moderate** (Answered 3-5) | **Low** (Answered 1-2) | |
| 78% | 19% | 3% | **It is important to protect individual privacy in a democracy like Alberta** |
| 56% | 34% | 10% | **I am concerned about the privacy of my own personal information** |
| 62% | 26% | 10% | **I am more concerned about the privacy of my own personal information than I was five years ago.** |
| 35% | 55% | 10% | **Privacy of personal information is at risk in Alberta** |

#### *3.1.1 Highlights:*

Albertans expressed strong agreement with the importance of protecting individual privacy in the province (78% in strong agreement).

Just over half (56%) expressed strong agreement with concern about the privacy of their own personal information. For the majority, the level of concern is increasing. Almost two-thirds (62%) agreed strongly that their concern was stronger now than it was five years ago.

However, smaller numbers agreed that privacy of personal information is at risk in Alberta (35% strongly agreed).

**Differences by location**
None

**Differences by generation**
Minor only. Slight tendency for 18-34 to be less concerned.

**Differences by occupation**
None

### 3.2 Experiences of Breach of Privacy

While the survey focused mostly on attitudes, some questions provided insights into individuals' own personal experiences. The question regarding perception of serious incidents of privacy invasion is one of them.

**Q2). Have you ever had an incident, which you thought was a serious breach of your privacy?**

For total sample (n = 604)

Yes = 28%

In addition, answers provided insight concerning peoples' views of the meaning of "privacy".

**Could you briefly describe it for me?**

For persons who had experienced a breach of privacy (n = 172)

| Percentages (multiple answer) | Classification... | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| 16% | Concerning names released to mailing lists | Donated to a charity, and name was passed on.<br>Businesses give out your name, resulting in lots of junk mail.<br>Someone phoned into a business and got information about me.<br>Businesses who ask for banking information when you make a purchase.<br>Unwanted solicitations. |
| 14% | Concerning use of personal information by financial institutions | Somebody misrepresented themselves as me and cleared a bank account.<br>Concerning credit cards.<br>One bank monitoring transactions in another without permission. |
| 12% | Concerning use of personal information by government institutions | Medical conditions on Alberta drivers license can be accessed by privatized agencies<br>One government department gave confidential information to another government department.<br>Concerning use of personal information in a child custody issue.<br>Serving of subpoenas to persons other than the one named in the subpoena.<br>Implications of gun registration (entering house without a warrant).<br>Welfare and foster care issues – easy for anyone to access or change personal data. |

| Percentages (multiple answer) | Classification... | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| 9% | Concerning theft or criminal activity s | Somebody broke into my house.<br>Other people opening personal mail.<br>Cheques disappearing from mailbox. |
| 7% | Related to phone soliciting | Telephone solicitors seem to have my personal details.<br>Unlisted phone number was published. |
| 5% | Concerning the workplace | Employer gave out personal information to a third party.<br>SIN number is on time sheets, which anybody can access.<br>Human Resources employee gave personal information to boss. |
| 5% | Concerning Internet use | Someone hacked into my personal computer.<br>Computer virus. |
| 5% | Concerning medical institutions | Unrelated health records used in an insurance claim.<br>They lost some medical records and never did find them.<br>Mixups – someone else has the same name. |
| 3% | Concerning school institutions | University gave my grades to someone without permission. |
| 2% | Concerning police use | Speeding ticket incident and police had lots of information which didn't seem relevant to speeding tickets.<br>Drinking incident from 40 years ago still shows on records. |
| 1% | Concerning insurance agencies. | Policy was revoked and agent shared information with a third party. |
| | Other, not classified | Incident involving my car which put my name in the newspapers.<br>Rental issues. |

### *3.2.1 Highlights:*

28% of the respondents said they had experienced a serious breach of their privacy.

These persons were asked to briefly describe the incident or incidents in question. The answers varied considerably in their depth and candour. They were categorized to the best of our ability by the sector according in which the incident took place.

- The most frequent incidents were concerned with mailing lists such as those used by businesses or charities which lead to unsolicited contacts.
- The second most frequent categories concerned financial institutions and credit ratings.
- The third most frequent category concerned government services including gun registration, custody issues, foster care, subpoena issues and others.
- Other incident categories mentioned less often concerned theft of personal materials, phone solicitation, workplace matters, internet hacking, medical records, educational records, police data and insurance matters.

**Differences by location**
Slightly higher incidence of breach of privacy incidents in Balance of Province (34%). More mention of "mailing list" incidents, and also more refusals to describe incidents. Also, less mention of "financial institutional" incidents.

**Differences by generation**
None.

**Differences by occupation**
Minor differences, with no practical significance.

### 3.3 Levels of Privacy Concerns, for Specific Information Items

This section examines what types of personal information are considered the most important from the perspective of retaining privacy, which generate the highest levels of concern, and what fears are behind the areas of concern.

**Q3). For each of the following statements I would like you to tell me, again using a 7 point scale where 1 is "Not at all important" and 7 is "Very important" how important it is to you to keep each of the following private and safe.**

**Q4). You had indicated the following were important to very important. Using the 7-point scale, how concerned are you that your personal information is at risk of being misused?**

| Rank | High Importance* (Answered 6-7) | INFORMATION ITEM | High Risk** (Answered 6-7) | Rank | Gap in Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 93% (n = 150) | Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores | 67% (n = 137) | 3 | -2 |
| 2 | 91% (n = 165) | Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union | 63% (n = 155) | 5 | -3 |
| 3 | 85% (n = 147) | Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post | 56% (n = 132) | 10 | -7 |
| 4 | 83% (n = 147) | Your tax files | 58% (n = 129) | 9 | -5 |
| 5 | 82% (n = 150) | Information held in credit reports | 73% (n = 130) | 1 | 4 |
| 6 | 80% (n = 166) | Your own personal health care records | 53% (n = 140) | 11 | -5 |
| 7 | 79% (n = 153) | Personal conversations on a cordless phone | 59% (n = 134) | 8 | -1 |
| 8 | 76% (n = 161) | Information about you collected by your employer | 46% (n = 141) | 16 | -8 |
| 9 | 74% (n = 172) | Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus | 60% (n = 141) | 7 | 2 |
| 10 | 74% (n = 160) | Personal conversation on a cell phone | 64% (n = 124) | 4 | 6 |
| 11 | 73% (n = 139) | E-mail messages on the Internet | 51% (n = 113) | 14 | -3 |
| 12 | 71% (n = 159) | Personal information sent over the fax | 53% (n = 134) | 12 | 0 |
| 13 | 61% (n = 145) | Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records | 51% (n = 100) | 15 | -2 |
| 14 | 61% (n = 150) | Shopping information over the Internet | 63% (n = 111) | 6 | 8 |

| Rank | High Importance* (Answered 6-7) | INFORMATION ITEM | High Risk** (Answered 6-7) | Rank | Gap in Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | 59% (n =155) | Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments | 53% (n = 103) | 13 | 2 |
| 16 | 57% (n =142) | Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet | 69% (n = 99) | 2 | 14 |
| 17 | 45% (n = 154) | Information about your donations to charities | 38% (n = 97) | 19 | -2 |
| 18 | 39% (n = 155) | Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use | 41% (n = 99) | 17 | 1 |
| 19 | 36% (n = 167) | Information about your shopping from Air Miles or club cards | 40% (n = 96) | 18 | 1 |

* In order to keep the length of the interview reasonably short, 5 items were selected randomly in each interview. Each item was therefore questioned with a partial sample of about 150 to 160 respondents. The "n's" shown in the table were adjusted to remove persons unable to provide a rating.

** The "risk" rating was obtained only for those with a 5,6 or 7 rating on the equivalent "importance" rating.

**Q5). You had indicated the following items might be at risk. Is the problem which concerns you:**

- **theft – somebody stealing your information, or**
- **the wrong people hearing or seeing your information, or**
- **the other person using your information in ways you don't like?**

| | Theft | Eavesdrop | Misuse | Item | Sample * |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 57% | 18% | 42% | Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores | 118 |
| 2 | 30% | 30% | 47% | Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union | 122 |
| 3 | 35% | 30% | 36% | Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post | 89 |
| 4 | 21% | 38% | 53% | Your tax files | 96 |
| 5 | 13% | 48% | 49% | Your own personal health care records | 102 |
| 6 | 20% | 36% | 48% | Information held in credit reports | 110 |
| 7 | 21% | 51% | 37% | Personal conversations on a cordless phone | 98 |
| 8 | 13% | 25% | 64% | Information about you collected by your employer | 67 |
| 9 | 11% | 34% | 59% | Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus | 80 |
| 10 | 16% | 41% | 48% | E-mail messages on the Internet | 86 |
| 11 | 20% | 53% | 39% | Personal conversation on a cell phone | 99 |
| 12 | 27% | 46% | 42% | Personal information sent over the fax | 97 |
| 13 | 8% | 43% | 50% | Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records | 74 |
| 14 | 48% | 24% | 43% | Shopping information over the Internet | 84 |

| | Theft | Eavesdrop | Misuse | Item | Sample * |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | 11% | 34% | 59% | Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments | 80 |
| 16 | 20% | 40% | 58% | Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet | 81 |
| 17 | 9% | 44% | 51% | Information about your donations to charities | 102 |
| 18 | 14% | 43% | 48% | Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use | 79 |
| 19 | 14% | 31% | 59% | Information about your shopping from Air Miles or club cards | 71 |

* This question asked only to those with a 5,6 or 7 rating on the "Risk" question. Multiple answers were allowed, and so the sum of the percentages may exceed 100%

### *3.3.1 Highlights:*

***Importance***

The importance of keeping various forms of personal information safe varied.

The top tier, highest ratings of importance were for financial data, personal mail and health records. Here is an abbreviated summary.

Rating "Very Important"

93% - Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores
91% - Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union
85% - Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post
83% - Your tax files
82% - Information held in credit reports
80% - Your own personal health care records

The second tier of ratings of importance were for personal conversations (including cordless phones, cell phones, email and faxed messages), workplace data, and government registry data.

Rating "Very Important"

79% - Personal conversations on a cordless phone
76% - Information about you collected by your employer
74% - Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus
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73% - E-mail messages on the Internet
71% - Personal information sent over the fax

The third tier of ratings of importance were for information items which may be important to some but not to others. They concern activities which are not universal, including legal problems, Internet use (shopping and surfing), and receipt of government benefits.

Rating "Very Important"

61% - Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records
61% - Shopping information over the Internet
59% - Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments
57% - Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet

The fourth and final tier of ratings of importance concerns charitable donations, utility records and traditional shopping data.

Rating "Very Important"

45% - Information about your donations to charities
39% - Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use
36% - Information about your shopping from Air Miles or club cards

***Concern About Risk of Misuse of Information***

At least some strong concern about risk of misuse of information was expressed for all the information items. Items at the top of the list included credit reports, Internet surfing, credit card numbers used when shopping, cell phone conversations, data from financial institutions, shopping information from Internet purchases and information in government registries.

Rating "Very Concerned" (percents based on those saying protection of item had high importance)

73% - Information held in credit reports
69% - Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet
67% - Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores
64% - Personal conversation on a cell phone
63% - Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union
63% - Shopping information over the Internet
60% - Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus
59% - Personal conversations on a cordless phone
58% - Your tax files
56% - Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post
53% - Your own personal health care records
53% - Personal information sent over the fax
53% - Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments
51% - E-mail messages on the Internet
51% - Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records
46% - Information about you collected by your employer
41% - Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use
40% - Information about your shopping from Air Miles or club cards
38% - Information about your donations to charities

***Relation of Importance to Concerns About Risk of Misuse***

For many of the items, the "importance" and the "concern over risk of misuse" are in rough correspondence. In other words, items of high importance tend to show relatively high concern over risk, and items of low importance tend to show relatively low concern over risk.

Three exceptions are "Information collected about you by your employer" which has relatively high importance yet relatively low concern over risk of misuse, and two Internet items (concerning tracking surfing patterns, and shopping data) which have relatively lower importance and higher concern over risk of misuse.

***Nature of Risk***

For each item, the concern over risk was identified as either theft, or unwanted exposure (others hearing or seeing), or use in an unwanted context (such as sale to mailing lists).

The concern varies by item. For example, the main concern over credit card security is theft. The main concern over cell phone security is others hearing the conversation. The main concern over tax file security is potential misuse of the information.

**Differences by location**
None of major significance. One interesting "importance" difference - information about donations to charities – rated higher by Calgarians (62% high importance).

**Differences by generation**
None of major significance. There are minor differences between items, but the sample sizes are small and the differences do not affect the overall rankings materially.

**Differences by occupation**
None of major significance. The sample sizes are small. One difference was that Professional / senior managerial less likely to express importance of protecting privacy of "Tracking actions when surfing on the Internet" (41% high importance, versus 70% and 62% for other groups).

### 3.4 Steps to Protect Privacy

If people are concerned about privacy, they may take steps to protect their personal information. This question indicates how many people have taken steps to protect their privacy, and what steps they have taken.

**Q6). Have you personally taken any steps to protect your own personal privacy?**

For total sample (n = 604)

Yes = 50%

**Q6a). IF YES, what steps have you taken?**

For those who have taken steps to protect their own personal privacy (n = 301)

| Percentage Mentioning (multiple answers) | Steps taken... |
|---|---|
| 34% | Limited information transfer over the Internet |
| 25% | Limited information transfer over the phone / fax |
| 25% | General caution when disclosing information |
| 12% | Limited use of credit cards |
| 11% | Use of security systems such as passwords or PIN #s |

Other methods for protection include: maintaining good information records (7%), destroying or shredding information (7%), unlisted phone number or address (3%), request to remove name from mailing lists (3%), have contacted authorities (2%).

**Q6b). IF NO, would you know where to look to get information on knowing what steps to take?**

For those who have not taken steps to protect their own personal privacy (n = 291)

Yes (would know where to look) = 25%

**If Yes, where would you look?**

For those who have not taken steps to protect their own personal privacy but would know where to look for information on steps to take (n = 72)

| Percentage Mentioning | Source of information... |
|---|---|
| 18% | Internet |
| 17% | Government agency (general reference) |
| 13% | Privacy Commissioner |
| 10% | Better Business Bureau / Credit Bureau / Banks |

Other possible sources included: Personal references (8%); Lawyer (7%); Security systems (6%); Library (4%); Media (3%). 11% were unsure, even after having indicated they would have a source.

### *3.4.1 Highlights:*

A high percentage of Albertans (50% exactly of the survey respondents) reported having taken steps to protect their private information. The most common steps were limiting information provided over the Internet or by telephone. Others said they were just "generally cautious" about what they disclosed. More intentional steps such as shredding paper or delisting phone numbers were less frequent.

The other 50% who hadn't taken steps to protect their private information were asked if they know whom to approach if they wanted advice. Only one-quarter of them (25% of half) could suggest sources. No one source predominated. The suggestions included: the Internet, government (generally), the Privacy Commissioner, Better Business Bureaus or similar agencies, and others.

**Differences by location**
None for "steps taken". For Balance of Province, less likely to know where to look for information on steps to take (17% of half would know).

**Differences by generation**
Slight tendency for 35-54 to be more likely to have "taken steps" (55% have). This group also more likely to suggest calling the Office of the Alberta Privacy Commissioner if they want more information.

**Differences by occupation**
Slight tendency for Professional / Senior Managerial to be more likely to have "taken steps" (59% have), and the steps they have taken are more likely to relate to "limiting information transferred over the Internet".

## 3.5 Awareness of and Support for Privacy Laws

This section provides insights into Albertans' views regarding government's role in protection of privacy. The main objectives are to assess awareness of and support for current privacy laws.

**Q7). Are you aware of any government laws which are intended to protect your personal information?**

For total sample (n = 604)

Yes = 39%

**Q7a). Which laws have you heard about?**

For total sample (n = 604)

| Percentage Mentioning (multiple answers) | Awareness of ... |
|---|---|
| 26% | FOIP (Alberta - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) |
| 8% | Bill 40 (Alberta - Health Information Act) |
| 4% | Bill C-6 (Canada – Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act) |
| 3% | Fair Trading Act (Alberta) |

Other laws mentioned were classified as: Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1%), "federal privacy laws" (1%), "Revenue Canada laws" (1%) and "other government laws" (2%).

**Q. 8) You have mentioned that you have heard of _____ (from Q7A). Using a 7 point scale where 1 is "Not at all" and 7 is "Very", how strongly do you support ___?**

| Support | | | Law | Sample * |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strong (Answered 6-7) | Moderate (Answered 3-5) | Not support (Answered 1-2) | | |
| 63% | 32% | 5% | FOIP (Alberta - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) | 151 |
| 49% | 43% | 9% | Bill 40 (Alberta - Health Information Act) | 45 |
| 60% | 28% | 12% | Bill C-6 (Canada – Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act) | 25 |
| 60% | 35% | 5% | Fair Trading Act (Alberta) | 20 |

* The "n's" shown in the table were adjusted to remove persons unable to provide a rating.

**Q8a). If answered Not at all Support and Not Support for any privacy laws, are there any particular concerns you would like to mention here?**

Very few people commented. Their remarks were mixed between "laws are not enforced" and "laws are extreme".

### *3.5.1 Highlights:*

Overall, 39% said they were aware of government laws designed to protect personal information. The question did not specify jurisdictions, so the answer could have been based upon Alberta laws, federal laws, both or other.

The law with the greatest awareness was Alberta's "FOIP law ("Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) (26% of total). Based only on persons who had heard of it, support for the FOIP Act was strong with 63% in strong support and very few negative towards it.

Bill 40, Alberta's Health Information Act, was mentioned by only a very small proportion (8% of total). Amongst this small number, support for Bill 40 ranged from strong to moderate.

Recognition for the federal Bill C-6 and Alberta's Fair Trading Act was low (less than 5% of total for both). However, support for the two bills was strong amongst those aware of them.

Only a very small number of persons expressed concerns about privacy laws. Their comments were polarized between those who believed that "the laws were not enforced sufficiently" or that "the laws were extreme".

**Differences by location**
None

**Differences by generation**
Age 55-74 slightly less likely to know about government laws which protect personal information (32%), and the 18-34 and 35-54 groups slightly more likely (44%). A similar pattern shows for awareness of the Alberta FOIP Act (20% awareness for 55-74, versus 27% and 29% for the two younger groups respectively).

**Differences by occupation**
Professional / senior managerial slightly more likely to know about government laws which protect personal information (50%). A similar pattern shows for awareness of the FOIP Act (37% aware) and Bill 40, the Health Information Act (10% aware).

### 3.6 Awareness of the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner is an officer of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. His mandate includes a broad range of responsibilities, including protecting the integrity of the Alberta FOIP Act (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act). The Act was passed in 1994 and came into effect in 1995. It is of interest to know how many Albertans are aware of the existence of the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner.

**Q9). Before you answered this survey, had you heard of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Province of Alberta?**

For total sample (n = 604)

Yes =33%

#### *3.6.1 Highlights:*

One-third of Albertans (33% of the survey respondents) said they had heard of the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner.

**Differences by location**
None

**Differences by generation**
Age 18-34 less likely to have heard of the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner (22%, compared to 41% and 40% for the two older age groups respectively).

**Differences by occupation**
Professional / senior managerial slightly more likely to say they have heard of the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner (43%).

### 3.7 Confidence in Privacy Protection in Government Service Delivery

Governments everywhere, faced with fiscal constraints, are looking for more efficient and more economical ways to deliver services. Some of the new service delivery models increase opportunities for exposure of individuals' personal information. The next question examines whether Albertans are concerned about risks of privacy violations in three service delivery models.

**Q10) Using the 7 point scale again, but now 1 is "Not at all Concerned" and 7 is "Very Concerned", how concerned are you with the following and their levels of protection of your personal information?**

For total sample (n = 604)

| **Strong Concern*** (Answered 6-7) | **Moderate Concern*** (Answered 3-5) | **Low Concern*** (Answered 1-2) | **Government Services...** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 51% | 39% | 11% | Government services over the Internet (example, sending in applications or completed forms online) |
| 49% | 39% | 11% | Government offices which cooperate so that one office handles several services, meaning that departments have to share personal information about you with each other |
| 42% | 43% | 14% | Government offices through private registries such as license bureaus |

** The percentages shown in the table were calculated on bases adjusted to remove persons unable to provide a rating.

### *3.7.1 Highlights:*

Albertans expressed unease concerning three models of government service delivery which involve the use of their personal information. The question did not specify jurisdictions, so the answer could have been based upon Alberta government services, federal government services, both, or other.

Numbers of the order of 50% expressed "strong concern" over the levels of protection of information involved with Internet-based services or shared situations where multiple services are delivered by one office. Numbers of the order of 40% expressed strong concern over government services provided through private registries. The balance generally expressed "moderate concern", with only very small numbers expressing "no concern".

**Differences by location**
None

**Differences by generation**
Concern over services delivered by Internet increases with age (41% for 18-34, 52% for 35-54, and 62% for 55-74, with strong concerns). No differences in concern over shared services delivery. Minor increases with age over services delivered through privatized registries.

**Differences by occupation**
None of practical significance.

### 3.8 Who Should Protect Privacy?

This section explores opinions concerning perceived responsibility for privacy protection, whether with government, business regulation or self-regulation.

**Q11). When it comes right down to it, who has the most responsibility for protecting personal information of individuals – the individuals who provide the information, or governments who collect it and makes laws about it, or businesses who also collect it?**

**And**

**Who has the second-most responsibility?**

For total sample (n = 604)

| Most Responsible for Protecting Privacy* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual** | **Government** | **Business** | **All equally** |
| 42% | 41% | 4% | 13% |

| Second Most Responsible for Protecting Privacy* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual** | **Government** | **Business** | **All equally** |
| 25% | 38% | 32% | 5% |

* The percentages shown in the table were calculated on bases adjusted to remove persons unable to provide a rating.

### *3.8.1 Highlights:*

This question was based on general sector responsibility and not specific individuals, governments or types of business.

Concerning who was most responsible for protecting privacy, Albertans were almost equally split between saying that Individuals had most responsibility (42%) and that Government had most responsibility (41%). Business was in a very distant third place (4%), and a small minority thought all three had equal responsibility (13%).

Concerning who was second most responsible, the percentages spread out to a more equal distribution between Individual, Government and Business.

Overall, the pattern places most responsibility on Individuals and Government, with much less on Business.

**Differences by location**
None

**Differences by generation**
55-74 more likely to say that Individual has main responsibility (53%).

**Differences by occupation**
None of significance.

## 3.9 Demographics

This section describes the characteristics of the sample.

For Total Sample (n = 604)

**Q13). Which of the following ranges best describes your age?**

| Age group | Percentages* |
|---|---|
| 18 – 34 | 33% |
| 35 – 64 | 43% |
| 55 – 74 | 24% |

* The percentages shown in the table were calculated on bases adjusted to remove persons unable to provide a rating.

**Q14). What is the highest level of schooling or education that you completed?**

| Education | Percentages* |
|---|---|
| Elementary – High School | 37% |
| College or Technical School | 25% |
| University – Post Graduate | 37% |

* The percentages shown in the table were calculated on bases adjusted to remove persons unable to provide a rating.

**Q15). Which of these occupational groups best describes your current employment?**

| Occupation | Percentages* |
|---|---|
| Professional and Senior Managerial | 33% |
| Other – employed | 39% |
| Unemployed and Other | 28% |

* The percentages shown in the table were calculated on bases adjusted to remove persons unable to provide a rating.

Note: **Other employed** includes: semi-skilled or labourer; skilled tradesperson; sales, service, clerical; junior managerial or administrative, farmer or rancher; self-employed. **Unemployed and other** includes: student, retired, homemaker, unemployed.

**Gender**

| Gender | Percentages |
|---|---|
| Male | 50% |
| Female | 50% |

**Geographic Area:**

| Geographic Area | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Edmonton CMA | 34% |
| Calgary | 33% |
| Balance of Province | 33% |

### *3.9.1 Highlights:*

The sample was evenly divided between greater Edmonton, Calgary and the rest of Alberta. The gender split was equal. There was good representation across age levels (from a minimum of 18 to a maximum of 74), education levels and occupations.

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATION

The previous chapter presented the key survey findings, without interpretation. This chapter presents key conclusions and interpretation drawn from the findings.

### 4.1 Relevant to Survey Validity and Interpretation

The survey can be assessed as having provided a valid reading of the views of adult Albertans, with the exception of seniors of age 75 and older. Older seniors were excluded from the survey sample because common experience and evidence indicates that seniors are likely to be much more concerned about privacy than are younger Albertans. In the interests of protecting scarce resources for the survey, it was decided to focus on younger respondents. At the same time, there was a clear understanding that the needs of older seniors as they might be partially revealed in the survey and as they are understood by Privacy staff would be taken into account in the design of actions resulting from the survey.

On a province-wide basis, the sample distribution was designed to reflect the actual distribution of population in large cities, middle-sized cities and rural areas across the province. The total sample size of 600, province-wide, is large enough to result in error margins which are generally less than ±4%.

***CONCLUSION***

*The findings of this survey can be taken as a valid representation of the views of the Alberta adult general public (defined as ages 18-74).*

This is the first survey of its type conducted by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta. While there have been other surveys conducted in other jurisdictions and by other sponsors on privacy issues, direct comparisons to the results of this survey are not available. This means that we cannot say, based on this survey, whether Albertans are more concerned or less concerned about privacy issues, or believe they are better served or not as well served by their government, than other Canadians or even than non-Canadians. The translation of the magnitude of the findings in this survey into the language of "problem requiring action" will have to be done using judgement based on the absolute numbers obtained in this survey.

***CONCLUSION***

*There is no baseline against which to compare the findings of this survey. The survey may itself become a baseline for future surveys. Whether or not the attitudes and opinions identified in the survey are serious enough to warrant action at this time will require judgement based beyond the survey results.*

The survey results were presented and analyzed in detail for the total sample, which represents the views of adult Albertans, province-wide. The data were also examined for differences according to location of residence of respondent, according to age and according to occupation.

As a generality, the overall patterns identified for the Province of Alberta persist across the different subgroups. Where there are differences, they tend to be differences of emphasis rather than differences which change entire response patterns.

The major differences identified tended to lie in Occupation. Respondents classified as Professional / senior managerial tended to have more awareness of privacy issues than did other respondents. They are also inclined to be less concerned about Internet issues than others, which may reflect their greater familiarity with the medium. Because Professional / senior managerial respondents also tend to be in the 35-54 year range, differences by Occupation are usually also reflected in differences by Age (although less strongly).

### *CONCLUSION*

*Results based on the total sample provide a snapshot of the views of the adult general public, province-wide. The data were also examined for differences between locational, age and occupational subgroups. Differences do exist but are generally small in relation to the magnitude of the overall patterns. In other word, differences between geographic areas or between age groups or between occupational groups are of the nature of a change in emphasis or degree rather than a change in pattern or direction. For example, by occupation, Professional / senior managerial respondents were more knowledgeable about privacy issues than others, and also less concerned about risks on the Internet than were others. But the difference was only of degree, and almost all respondents were concerned to some extent. It is safe to assume that the province-wide snapshot based on the total provincial sample provides an adequate overview of the views of the majority of adult Albertans.*

### 4.2 Relevant to the First Survey Purpose, "To assess public awareness regarding privacy issues and areas of privacy concern".

Do Albertans support the need to protect individual privacy in our province? Definitely. 78% strongly supported the need. Is privacy protection a concern to Albertans? Definitely. Almost all expressed some level of concern, with 56% strongly concerned. Are Albertans becoming more concerned about privacy protection? Definitely. Most said their concern was stronger now than five years ago, with 62% in strong agreement.

And are Albertans encountering situations which they believe infringe on their privacy? Many. 28% in the survey said their privacy had been breached. The concerns expressed attitudinally are being supported by behavior and experience in many instances.

***CONCLUSION***

*Privacy protection is an issue with Albertans. Attitudinally, most Albertans support the need to protect the privacy of personal information. Behaviorally, many are already taking steps to do so themselves.*

For Albertans, privacy protection appears to be a generalized concern and not specifically related to Alberta. While most did agree that "privacy of personal information is at risk in Alberta", the number who strongly held this opinion (35%) is less than the proportion with definite concerns about privacy overall.

***CONCLUSION***

*For Albertans, privacy protection is a generalized issue or concern related to conditions of the contemporary social and business environment, and not specifically related to conditions in Alberta.*

Ratings were obtained on a large number of information items, ranging from personal bank accounts to information on utility accounts to personal conversations on cordless phones. While concerns were expressed for all, to some degree, some items were more important and of more concern than others. Financial information was high in importance and high in concern for almost all respondents.

***CONCLUSION***

*Privacy concerns spread over a wide range of situations. However, some areas are more important, and of more concern to Albertans, than others. Predictably, the security of financial information is at the top of the list. However, the security of many other types of personal information, while not at the top of the list, is also of concern.*

New ways of delivering government services are emerging in this cost-conscious new century. These include Internet-based delivery, shared service models and privatized registries. The survey asked specifically about concerns over security of information using these models of service delivery. The results show relatively high levels of concern. The levels of concern over Internet delivery and shared service models are about equal to the level of concern shown for email transmissions in an earlier question. The level of concern over privatized registries is lower, and about equal to the level mentioned over utility records or Air Miles cards in an earlier question.

The survey question did not ask the survey respondents if they were aware of these modes of service delivery. Rather, it described the service delivery models and asked for an opinion of concern based on the description. At this time, Alberta has used privatized registries for several years. Internet-based services are generally newer (with the possible exception of income tax filings), and "shared services" is a concept likely not known to many. As the use of these new service delivery methods grows, concern about their security may become more vocal.

### *CONCLUSION*

*Albertans expressed high to moderate levels of concern about security of information in Internet-based government service delivery models, shared services models and government registries, when these models were explained to them. It is possible that concerns may increase as these service delivery models become more common.*

### 4.3 Relevant to the Second Survey Purpose, "To help in design of communication activity carried out by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner".

The survey results show that Albertans believed that the sector with the most responsibility for privacy protection was either Government or the Individual him / herself. The public do not look to Business, in the first instance, to protect their private information.

These data beg the question: how can Individuals or Governments or Business protect private information? What roles are appropriate? What are the expectations?

The survey did not probe further. However, logic would say that there are a limited number of activities or roles which each of the sectors can perform,

- Individuals can do two basic types of activities: they can restrict the amount of information they send out, or the ways in which they send it; and they can inform themselves (about the policies of those to whom they entrust their personal information, about the laws of the jurisdictions in which they operate).
- Government can do two or possibly three basic types of activities: they can pass laws or create regulations which enforce privacy protection, and they can take very good care of the large amounts of private information which they hold. As well, they may educate the citizenry to help them help themselves (part of the mandate of the Alberta Privacy Commissioner's Office).
- Business has one basic type of activity: safeguarding private information entrusted to it. The many activities which Business may carry out, such as writing and publicizing privacy policies, spending money on anti-theft protection, selling or not selling customer lists, and others all relate to the basic role of safeguarding information.

Relevant to the "restricting" role for Individuals, half are now taking steps to protect their own private information. But the other half have not taken steps, and only a minority of them said they would know where to go for information on how to approach the issue. Relevant to the "informing" role, the majority are not familiar with the protections currently afforded them by law. Only 39% said they knew of any laws designed to protect private information, with most of them familiar only with Alberta's FOIP which relates exclusively to information held by public bodies in Alberta. Only 33% said that they had heard of the Privacy Commissioner of Alberta before starting this survey. We did not ask specifically how many had ever asked businesses about their privacy policies. However, this was an infrequent response in reply to "what steps have you taken to protect your own privacy?"

***CONCLUSION***

*Given the strong views expressed in the survey that either Individuals or Government have the most responsibility for privacy protection, an opportunity has been identified for public education on steps which individuals can take to protect themselves, and on the resources and legal protections available to them.*

The categories of information for which Albertans say privacy protection is the most important were various forms of financial records, personal mail and health records. These are universal forms of information engaged in by virtually all Albertans. A second tier of categories of information for which privacy protection was said to be important, and which are engaged in by most Albertans, includes personal conversations (including cordless phones, cell phones, email and faxed messages), workplace data, and government registry data. Not only was the stated importance of privacy protection for all these items high, but levels of concern about their risk of privacy violation was also relatively high.

***CONCLUSION***

*If choices must be made, Albertans would likely welcome learning about how to protect their information, and about the protection afforded them by government, for their financial records, personal mail, health records, personal conversations, workplace data and government registry data – in that order of priority. These items were the most important to the public in terms of requiring privacy protection, and carried enough concern about risk to be deserving of attention.*

## APPENDIX A COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE

ID _____
City _____
Phone Number _____

### *QUESTIONNAIRE – PRIVACY ISSUES*

Hi there, I'm _____ calling from GPC Research. We are conducting a brief, 8 minute survey, on behalf of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for Alberta. Would you mind answering some questions for us tonight?

***INSERT WORDING TO CHECK QUOTAS – GENDER AND AGE (range 18 to 74).***

My questions tonight are about privacy and protecting personal information which is in the hands of businesses, institutions or governments.

Q1). I am going to read you a series of statements. I would like you to tell me how much you agree with them, by giving me a number from 1 to 7, where 1 is "Don't Agree at all" and 7 is "Agree Very Much". READ STATEMENTS. ROTATE.

| *Statement* | Not at all Agree | | | | | | Very Much Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It is important to protect individual privacy in a democracy like Alberta. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Privacy of personal information is at risk in Alberta | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am concerned about the privacy of my own personal information. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am more concerned about the privacy of my own personal information than I was five years ago. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q2). Have you ever had an incident which you thought was a serious breach of your privacy?

___ Yes, could you briefly describe it for me _____
___ No

Q3). For each of the following statements I would like you to tell me, again using a 7 point scale where 1 is "Not at all important" and 7 is "Very important" how important it is to you to keep each of the following private and safe. **(ROTATE and RANDOMIZE – CHOOSE 5 ONLY).**

| | Not at all Important | | | | | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Your own personal health care records | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Email messages on the Internet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Shopping information over the Internet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about you collected by your employer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about your donations to charities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information held in credit reports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Your tax files | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about your shopping habits from Air Miles or club cards | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal conversations on a cell phone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal conversations on a cordless phone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal information sent over the fax | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**FOR THOSE WITH A 5,6 OR 7 RATING ONLY – FROM Q3.**

Q4). You had indicated the following were important to very important. Using the 7 point scale, how concerned are you that your personal information is at risk of being misused? 1 is "not at all concerned" and 7 is "very concerned". READ ITEMS.

| | Not at all concerned | | | | | | Very concerned |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Your own personal health care records | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Email messages on the Internet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Shopping information over the Internet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tracking your actions when you surf on the Internet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Financial information from your accounts in your bank or credit union | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Credit card numbers which you use in restaurants or stores | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about you collected by your employer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about your donations to charities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Utility records, such as telephone, TV, gas or electricity use | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information held in credit reports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Your tax files | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about receiving government benefits, such as Social Assistance or Workers Compensation payments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information you provide to government registries, such as license bureaus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information about your shopping habits from Air Miles or club cards | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Information concerning legal problems you may have had, such as police or criminal records | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal conversations on a cell phone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal conversations on a cordless phone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal correspondence sent through the public mail, with Canada Post | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Personal information sent over the fax | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

FOR THOSE WITH A 5,6 OR 7 RATING ONLY – FROM Q4.

Q5). You had indicated the following items might be at risk. For (READ NAME OF ITEM), is the problem which concerns you READ LIST OF CHOICES. REPEAT UNTIL ALL ITEMS COVERED.

___ theft - somebody stealing your information, or
___ the wrong people hearing or seeing your information, or,
___ the other person using your information in ways you don't like?
___ OTHER, please explain _____

Q6). Have you personally taken any steps to protect your own personal privacy?

____ Yes (go to Q6a)
____ No (go to Q6b)

Q6a). IF YES, what steps have you taken?

_____

_____

(skip to Q7)

Q6b). IF NO, would you know where to look to get information on knowing what steps to take?

____ No
____ Yes, where would you look? _____

Q7). Are you aware of any government laws which are intended to protect your personal information?

___ Yes
___ No (skip to Q9).

Q7a). IF YES: Which laws have you heard about? DO NOT READ LIST.

___ FOIP (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Alberta)
___ Health Information Act (Bill 40, Alberta – about health information)
___ Fair Trading Act (Alberta – about credit reports)
___ Bill C-6 (Canada – privacy in the private sector)
___ Other, describe _____

Q8). You have mentioned that you have heard of _____ (from Q7a), using a 7 point scale where 1 is "Not at all" and 7 is "Very", how strongly do you support _____?

| | Support not at all | | | | | | Support Very Strongly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FOIP (Freedom of Information and Privacy) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Health Information Act (Bill 40) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Fair Trading Act | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Bill C-6 (Canada Privacy Act) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Other 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q8a). IF ANSWERED 1 OR 2 (ONLY) ON ANY OF THE ABOVE, Are there any particular concerns you would like to mention here?

_____

_____

Q9). Before you answered this survey, had you heard of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Province of Alberta?

___ Yes
___ No
___ Not sure

Q10) Using the 7 point scale again, but now 1 is "Not at all Concerned" and 7 is "Very Concerned", how concerned are you with the following and their levels of protection of your personal information?

| | Not at all Concerned | | | | | | Very concerned |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Government services over the Internet. For example, sending in applications or completed forms on line | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Government services through private registries such as license bureaus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Government offices which cooperate so that one office handles several services, meaning that departments have to share personal information about you with each other | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q11). When it comes right down to it, who has the most responsibility for protecting personal information of individuals – the individuals who provide the information, or governments who collect it and makes laws about it, or businesses who also collect it? RECORD ANSWER. Who has the second-most responsibility?

| | Most | Second Most |
|---|---|---|
| Individual | | |
| Government | | |
| Business | | |
| Don't Know | | |

Q13). Which of the following ranges best describes your age? Is it …

___ 18 – 24
___ 25 – 34
___ 35 – 44
___ 45 – 54
___ 55 – 64
___ 65 – 74

Q14). What is the highest level of schooling or education that you completed? READ LIST.

___ Elementary school
___ Some high school
___ High School Graduate
___ Some College or Technical School
___ College or Technical School Graduate
___ Some university
___ University Graduate
___ Post Graduate Studies
___ Professional (MD, Lawyer etc.)
___ Other, explain _____

Q15). Which of these occupational groups best describes your current employment? READ LIST.

___ Semi-skilled or labourer
___ Skilled Tradesperson
___ Sales, service, clerical
___ Professional
___ Junior managerial or administrative
___ Senior managerial or administrative
___ Student
___ Retired
___ Homemaker
___ Farmer or Rancher
___ Unemployed (do not read)
___ Other (do not read)

Gender: Please Record without asking

____ Male
____ Female

***THANK YOU***

## APPENDIX B TABLE OF STATISTICAL TOLERANCES

### STATISTICAL TOLERANCES[3]
Probability Level: 19 times out of 20

HOW TO READ

For a sample of size READ DOWN FAR LEFT COLUMN),
The range of Error is ± (READ INTO INTERIOR CELL)
Where obtained percentage is (READ ACROSS TOP ROW).

Example: If the sample is 500, then 4% could be ± 1.7% (19 times out of 20).

| With a sample of | 2% or 98% | 4% or 96% | 6% or 94% | 8% or 92% | 10% or 90% | 12% or 88% | 15% or 85% | 20% or 80% | 25% or 75% | 30% or 70% | 35% or 65% | 40% or 60% | 45% or 55% | 50% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | | 3.8 | 4.7 | 5.3 | 5.9 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 7.8 | 8.5 | 9.0 | 9.3 | 9.6 | 9.8 | 9.8 |
| 150 | | 3.1 | 3.8 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 5.2 | 5.7 | 6.4 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 8.0 |
| 200 | | 2.7 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 4.2 | 4.5 | 4.9 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 6.9 | 6.9 |
| 250 | 1.7 | 2.4 | 2.9 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 5.0 | 5.4 | 5.7 | 5.9 | 6.1 | 6.2 | 6.2 |
| 300 | 1.6 | 2.2 | 2.7 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 4.9 | 5.2 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 5.7 |
| 400 | 1.4 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 3.5 | 3.9 | 4.2 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 4.9 |
| 500 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 2.1 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.4 |
| 600 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| 800 | .97 | 1.4 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.5 |
| 1000 | .87 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| 1200 | .79 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| 1500 | .71 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| 2000 | .61 | .86 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.2 |

[3] Canadian Advertising Research Foundation, Media Research Standards Procedures.